

# Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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## REVIEW OF IMPACT FROM STATEWIDE DISASTERS

### Conservation and Recreation Division

August 4, 2008

**TOTAL CURRENT ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT TO DIVISION: \$12,055,000**

#### State Parks Bureau

- 24 state parks have been impacted to varying degrees by floods, heavy rainfalls, and strong winds. Major impacts include completely damaged electrical transformers, electrical pedestals in campgrounds, and lift stations for waste water, erosion of roads and trails, undermining of parking lots, wash-outs around buildings foundations, downed trees and limbs, displaced and damaged picnic tables and docks, water damage in park buildings, delayed construction, revenue producing recreation areas under water, and sediment left behind after floods receded. Preliminary damage estimate is \$3,600,000. At this point in time, two park campgrounds remain closed, and access is limited in several other parks.
- In addition, the bureau has seen a decrease in camping receipts and refunds for reserved camping, lodge, shelter and cabin rentals for a current total of an estimated \$1,175,000 in lost revenue.
- People have been unable to use state parks, either partially or in total. Family reunions, large events and weddings had to find other locations for their respective events.
- Parks staff have found it necessary to close some portions of the trail systems in individual parks, and it is expected that citizens will be expecting these trails to be repaired and reopened quickly.
- Parks projects involving some new or renovated structures may have to be put on hold, pending more immediate repairs. This will cause some pushback from groups that will view this delay as unacceptable.
- Approximately 15 families that were evacuated from their homes in Palo camped at Pleasant Creek Recreation Area, and the 14-day maximum stay was waived; Geode State Park accommodated residents of Illinois that commuted daily on HWY 34 bridge over the Mississippi River to work in Iowa until the road was repaired and reopened.
- **Total Current Estimated Fiscal Impact to Parks Bureau: \$4,775,000**

#### Wildlife Bureau

- A district by district assessment was taken of structures such as dikes, levees, water control structures, parking lots, boat ramps, docks, culverts, signage, roads, buildings, etc. with a \$4,000,000 estimated impact at this time.
- This bureau manages croplands (about 35,000 acres) as well as natural habitat lands within the public land boundaries. The current estimate is \$1,000,000 in lost cropping revenue.
- In terms of wildlife, the mammals generally survive in rising water and are able to move out of harms way except in flash flood situations. Ground nesting birds have a more difficult time, and a significant impact is expected on pheasants, quail, and other game and non-game ground nesting birds. (An accurate quantitative impact on the pheasant population is not expected until after August 15, 2008, and that will impact projected revenue in hunting license sales if the population shows a drastic decline as expected.). The good news is that amphibians are expected to have thrived under the current conditions.
- **Total Current Estimated Fiscal Impact to Wildlife Bureau: \$5,000,000**

#### Fisheries Bureau

- Fisheries Bureau has seen a dramatic decline in fishing license sales during May, June and July (approximately 32,000 licenses or \$670,000 lost revenue).
- Two trout hatcheries (Big Spring/Elkader and Manchester) sustained damage to buildings and loss of fish. Estimated repairs to just these two areas are estimated at \$500,000.
- Damage to fishing related infrastructure at lakes and streams is statewide. Damage and cost estimates are still coming in as water has not receded in all areas. Impacts include shoreline erosion, lost or damaged fishing jetties, constructed in-stream trout habitat lost, trout stocking access roads impaired, universally

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accessible fishing access sites destroyed, informational signs gone, boat ramps undercut, etc.—estimated at \$500,000.

- Recreational angling and boating opportunities have been diminished by the damage to public access sites and boat ramps and closure of some lakes and streams to boating.
- Over 2,000 staff hours were committed to clean-up.
- Iowa will be dealing with flood impacts to streams and rivers for the next several years as attempts are made to repair “damage”, which may better be described as “change” in many cases.
- Staff time spent on flood mitigation is staff time spent away from other activities that serve the public.
- Long-term impacts to aquatic resources and fishing opportunities are varied, with some positive impacts and some negative impacts from flooding. Trout stocking will have to be reduced 20% the remainder of 2008.
- **Total Current Estimated Fiscal Impact to Fisheries Bureau: \$1,670,000**

## Law Enforcement Bureau

- The District Offices located at Manchester was inundated with flood waters and incurred expenses of \$55,000 to repair.
- Between the tornadoes in Butler and Buchanan counties and the Little Sioux Boy Scout Camp, and the 2008 statewide floods, officer full-time and part-time hours amounted to over \$55,000 of salary costs going to disaster assistance helping with search and rescues, traffic control, patrol for looters, providing first aide, assisting in evacuation efforts (especially with boat the department boat fleet), environmental impact assessment efforts, and security efforts.
- Normal recreational activities that our customers typically enjoy such as boating and fishing have been replaced with clean-up efforts and water levels too high for recreational boating or fishing opportunities.
- Most of the bureau’s efforts deal with providing law enforcement support immediately after the disaster strikes. Help includes providing boats/staff to EPA, National Guard, and DNR EPD staff to locate hazardous materials and orphan drums that have been displaced by the various disasters. Some officers have been trained in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) and are available for helping emergency workers (law enforcement, fire fighters, EMS, etc.) by providing staff for debriefings after the disasters.
- **Total Current Estimated Fiscal Impact to Law Enforcement Bureau: \$110,000.**

## Forestry Bureau

- This bureau suffered damage during the tornadoes early in the season. The Forestry Bureau estimates \$250,000 in damage costs incurred during the tornadoes.
- The State Nursery saw revenue loss due to weather-related planting conditions of \$240,000.
- The Forestry Bureau is also looking at ways to help Iowans with replacement trees across the state. It has instituted a \$10,000 grant program to help replant wind breaks, and is working on a way to supply stock from the State Forest Nursery to the citizens of Iowa.
- **Total Current Estimated Fiscal Impact to Forestry Bureau: \$500,000**

## Conservation & Recreation Division

In general, the need for adequate, consistent funding for Iowa public lands management and outdoors recreation is reemphasized with the flood and tornadoes of 2008. The department will do everything it can to keep parks, state forests, fishing lakes and wildlife areas open and accessible to the public. However, many needed projects will be delayed into future years. The department will have to communicate with many stakeholder groups who have been patiently waiting for their local lake or park to get the necessary funding to complete their park project. Roads, boat ramps, fish hatcheries, etc. will be repaired within the abilities of the department’s budget. Prioritization and reworking budgets and engineering projects will be necessary.

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